

# DisABILITY Outreach

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**July 28-August 2**  
Division of Persons  
with Disabilities,  
Department for the  
Blind, Vocational  
Rehabilitation  
Services sponsor  
Youth Leadership  
Forum for Students  
with Disabilities.  
See pages 3,4,8,9.

## Commission of Persons with Disabilities

The quarterly commission meeting was held by ICN on 2-1-02. Chair Darlene McMartin is surveying members to determine their satisfaction with this first ICN meeting and suggestions of improvement for future meetings. ICN sites are rated on their accessibility making it possible for site selection around the state to include lowans with disabilities.

### Education Task Force:

Dan Harmon received a phone call from Faith Kirk of the Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, commending the Commission in their efforts during October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month. She also announced a feature about those efforts will be included in next year's national materials. See page 5.

### Awards Task Force:

Chris Wilson, chair of the task force, announced nomination forms are available for the various awards categories including Employer of the Year, Governor's Award, Commissioners' Award, Youth Award and Best Accessible Design Award. Forms are available at the division office.

### Legislative Task Force:

Chair Joe Hays has made available the position paper from the Commissioners. See page 6. Additionally, he asks that individuals contact him with any questions or concerns about legislation. He can be reached through the division office or [Joe.hays@icva.state.ia.us](mailto:Joe.hays@icva.state.ia.us)

### Access Task Force:

Steve Oberbroekling reports the task force is coordinating with the awards task force on the accessible design award. No consensus on adoption of a new building code has been achieved.

## **Governor Tom Vilsack and Lt. Governor Sally Pederson announced the appointment of Jill Avery as Administrator for the Persons with Disabilities Division in the Iowa Department of Human Rights.**

"Jill Avery has the desire, determination and compassion to be an outstanding advocate for persons with disabilities," Vilsack said. "The Lt. Governor and I are confident that Ms. Avery's background and experience will make her an effective leader."

Avery is currently the Director of Children and Families of Iowa, Family Violence Center, which helps hundreds of Iowans who are victims of domestic abuse. Avery also has served as coordinator for the Children and Families of Iowa Domestic Violence Hotline. Avery is a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa.

### ***Meet Jill Avery***

Jill Avery is formerly the Director for Children and Families of Iowa, Family Violence Center, one of the largest shelters in the nation for victims of violent crime. Her ten-year expertise includes serving and advocating for many victims with disabilities and service provision for those individuals throughout the state of Iowa. She and her daughter Hope Avery, traveled the United States last year for promoting disability issues and Easter Seals services. They had the honor of meeting President Bush and Vice President Cheney in the Oval Office of the White House. Jill has a neurological disability and hearing loss. Jill's daughter Hope Avery, has a



physical disability called split-hand deformity. She had her feet and ankles amputated when she was just eight years old. Hope wears prosthetics and uses a service dog. Over a thirteen-year period, Jill and Hope Avery have had the opportunity to educate hundreds of individuals regarding both visible and non-visible disabilities. Jill is very excited to accept this new position.

### ***Avery States...***

*I believe I have the desire, commitment, skills and experience to be a strong leader for the Department of Human Rights, Division of Persons with Disabilities. I have advocated for individuals with disabilities for 13 years both professionally and personally. My experience encompasses service delivery for persons with disabilities as well as personal understanding of the challenges these individuals face on a daily basis. As a parent of a child with a physical disability as well as an individual with a non-visible disability, I believe I can use this experience to the fullest.*

## YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

*Mike Williams, Staff*

This has been an exceptional year for getting the word out about the Iowa Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities. Several student alumni have appeared as panelists for a variety of forums concerning high school students with disabilities. They have added a real sense of what the YLF is all about by addressing issues related specifically to their own experiences. Those who have participated in these panel discussions include Karma Quick (1999 delegate, 2000 staff), Kristin Mills (2000), Tanya Randall (1999 delegate, 2001 staff), Meagan Anderson (2001), Carrie Mallinger (2001), Daniel Wadhams (2000), Jay Walton (2001), and Josh Cross (2001). Each one of these alumni has done a professional job speaking and an outstanding job answering questions about how YLF has affected their lives and their futures.

Topics of discussion have included what it was like growing up with a disability, how they were treated by teachers, how they were treated by classmates, what their curriculum was like, what leadership qualities they feel are important, what would they recommend for the teachers to do differently, and what significance YLF plays in their lives.



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The alumni began the year speaking to a group from the Parent Educator Connection in October. In November they were busy with two sessions for The Iowa Department of Education and The Division for Vocational Rehabilitation Services speaking to educators from Iowa and all over the United States. Later in November they traveled through the fog to Twin Lakes where they addressed AEA counselors from the Arrowhead 5 agency.



In January, several alumni joined in on an ICN training from sites in Des Moines, Central College in Pella and Mt. Mercy College in Cedar Rapids, for an estimated 130 Work Transition Counselors.

*Continued on page 4*



## YLF Alumni Continued

Later in January, alumni were invited to participate in the annual Parent Educator Connection Conference XVIII, Progress Through Partnerships, in Ames on the ISU campus.

Each of these sessions for YLF brought about a new awareness not only for the program but a new awareness for each YLF alumni, enabling them to grow and share their leadership knowledge and their self-advocacy skills.



Karma Quick put her experience from one of the sessions this way,  
 “As for yesterday, I think that was the panel I've had the most fun participating in! The questions were challenging and fun, and really made me think about my experiences more, as well as the application to life right now. If the audience was antagonistic, I think it's because they wanted to see what we were thinking and how the YLF has really changed us, as well as to see how they can apply it to their lives--they were issuing us a challenge. That's just how I felt, though. But it was good, and I think each of us had some good answers to give!”

If you have any questions or would like more information please contact our offices at 888-219-0471 or email [dhrr.disabilities@dhrr.state.ia.us](mailto:dhrr.disabilities@dhrr.state.ia.us).



If you would like to be a volunteer staff member for one week of exhausting, exhilarating, and enthusiastic activity or to be a mentor to a student with a disability, contact Mike Williams at 1-888-219-0471 for application materials.

## New Freedom for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

*Dan Harmon, Commissioner*

**“New Freedom for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” replaces “Win with Ability” from the Office of Disability Employment Policy, Department of Labor, 2002 –2003**

The main focus will be on developing and establishing mentoring on local levels for persons with disabilities.

A number of new documents will be available for use in any disability employment efforts.

- Workplace Accommodation
- Assistive Technology
- New – Disability Fact Sheet
- Essential Job Functions
- Accessible Meetings
- Emergency Procedures
- “Yes We Can”

*Faith Kirk of the Office of Disability Policy, Dept. of Labor, announces that Iowa’s successful projects will be emphasized in next year’s National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) kit.*

### Typical Activities\*:

The “New Freedom for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” will contain typical activities that set an example for things you may do to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in your community. Examples carried out in 2001:

One such typical activity will read:

**The Iowa Commission of Persons with Disabilities Task Force on Education and Employment in cooperation with the Des Moines County Board of Supervisors, The Iowa Region 16 Regional Workforce Investment Board, Burlington area radio stations KKMI, KQ92, KBUR participated in a month long initiative to promote the “Win with Ability” message creating 1600 name tags and distributing them to employees at Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation....**

\*This is information gathered from a personal phone call from Faith Kirk at the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy for use in the Educational Kit for 2002. She was writing the first draft of the typical activities that she related to me on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2001.

*Joe Hays, Commissioner*

As the registered lobbyist for the Commission, I carry information to the legislators on various issues involving disability, especially as it relates to employment. Please contact me if you have a concern or need additional information. The Commission at their last quarterly meeting adopted the following position paper.

## ***Position Paper***

The members of the Iowa Commission of Persons with Disabilities urge you to consider the following viewpoints in your deliberations:

- ***Mental Health Parity:*** It is important that Iowans with mental health disabilities have access to medical treatment allowing them to live and work in their communities. This includes ***all*** Iowans with mental health illnesses, no matter the cause. This is a business friendly position in that 60% of employee absences are due to psychological problems. We ***support*** legislation mandating equal medical coverage.
- ***State Employee Accommodation Fund:*** In order to increase the number of individuals with disabilities hired and retained in state employment, a fund for provision of reasonable accommodations needs to be established. Each agency's budget currently must be stretched to provide reasonable accommodations for employees. This creates a dilemma for agency directors as they try to complete their mandated programs and have funds available to accommodate workers with disabilities. A separate fund for accommodations would encourage hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities in an equal manner as other citizens of our state. We ***support*** the creation of this fund.

*For additional information, contact:*

*Division of Persons with Disabilities  
Department of Human Rights  
515-242-6172  
dhr.disabilities@dhr.state.ia.us*

## Work Incentive Grant

*John TenPas, Staff*

For the past two years, the Division has partnered with Iowa Workforce Development on the Work Incentive Grant from the Department of Labor. The grant is to identify and eliminate barriers restricting the utilization of Iowa's One-Stop Center System by persons with disabilities

We serve as a member of the resource team and have provided technical assistance to the various regional workforce centers through 18 access surveys and transition plans as well as disability awareness training. We continue to advise these workforce centers as a way to accommodate Iowans with disabilities in their effort to seek employment. For more information, call 1-888-219-0471 or [dhrr.disabilities@dhrr.state.ia.us](mailto:dhrr.disabilities@dhrr.state.ia.us)

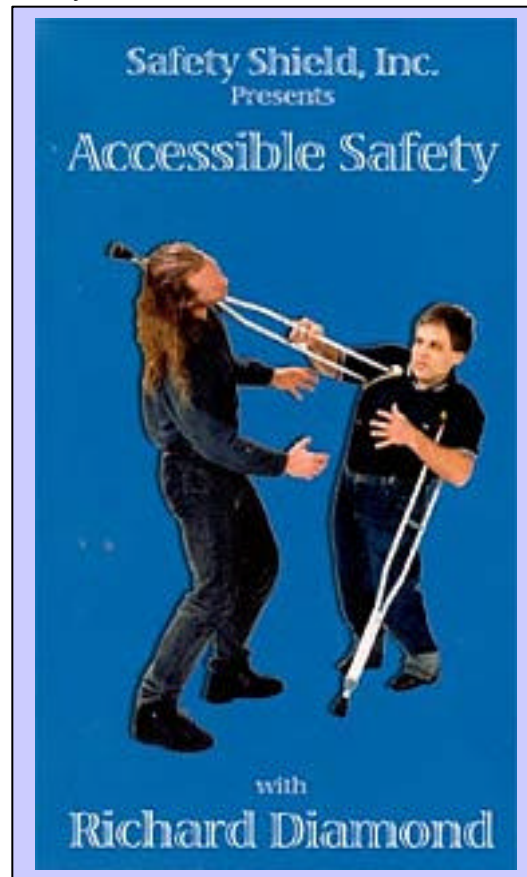
## It's Tournament Time

**Entry deadline is: April 17, 2002.**

Iowa Paralyzed Veterans of America announces the MIDWEST PVA BASS TOURNAMENT May 17-19, 2002 at Lake Okoboji. The tournament is three competitions: Bank is limited to individuals with a confirmed physical disability who wish to fish from the bank. Or Open and Team Competition open to all anglers with a confirmed physical disability who wish to fish from a boat (limited to 100 anglers). For entry form or more information, contact: Iowa PVA Chapter, 3703 1/2 Douglas Ave. Des Moines, IA 50310 (888) 909-4782.

## Accessible Safety Video

"Self-defense does not start with the physical. The key is to believe in yourself" states Richard P. Diamond in promoting this video. It teaches individuals with disabilities how to recognize the potential for violence and how to extricate themselves before a confrontation takes place or how to defend themselves if an altercation does take place, no matter what the disability.



This video is a product of Safety Shield's community action program. To learn more about Safety Shield and this video, go to [www.accessiblesafety.com](http://www.accessiblesafety.com) The video can be ordered through [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

## A Graduate of YLF Speaks Out

*Tanya Randall, Alumni*

Hi, I am Tanya Randall, from Des Moines, Iowa. I have a reading and writing disability. The first time I went to the Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities was in 1999. The experience made me become more independent; learn about a wide variety of disabilities, and a lot of other things. I am now a sophomore at Grand View College in Des Moines.

From the experience at YLF I have learned how to become more independent. I know how to ask my professors for help when I need it and also how to ask for accommodations. I have an advisor that helps me out. Also most of the time we talk together everyday, however, last semester we didn't have a very good communication between each other. Last semester I had requested books on tape for my Introduction to Literature class. I didn't receive books on tape until the last four weeks of class. At this point it was too late for me to pull my grade up so I ended up failing the class. I told my advisor at the very beginning of the semester that I needed the books on tape, but she would only say that there is another person on campus that needed them and they didn't have a lot of help to get the tapes done.

I also learned from YLF in 1999 that there are many other types of disabilities besides learning disabilities. The minute I walked in to YLF I knew I belonged to a big family. This family since 1999 has grown so much. I went back in 2001 and was a peer counselor. I really enjoyed doing this and I learned so much more from the

second YLF. I learned about Vocational Rehabilitation and I learned that they could help you get the accommodations that you need.

During your experience at YLF you meet a lot of friends that you will keep your whole lifetime. This one girl and I from YLF went to an ISU Women's Basketball game together. I had so much fun with her at the basketball game. I also keep in touch with a lot of other people. As Josh Cross says, "I wanted to stay. It was like a family there, everyone is like your brother or sister."

I often volunteer my time to go speak to different groups. One time we went to Ames to speak to educators. Since my mom, dad, and grandparents live in Ames or close to Ames they came and listened to me speak. My grandma told me that they learned so much. My grandma told me that I had more confidence in what I do. She also said that I have more patience. I used to be afraid to travel by myself. Now my grandparents say that I'm not afraid to travel to see someone by myself. I wasn't very good at directions now I am getting better at it. My grandma also told me I've become more of a self-sufficient person. I used to go home every weekend to my house in Ames because I didn't want to stay at Grand View College. I'm not as intimidated of my friends anymore. When I was younger I wouldn't go out with my friends. As the years go on I have become more confident with my friends. I don't get as embarrassed any more. My grandparents also say that I've become independent. I believe YLF developed all of these new attributes of my life.

*Continued on page 9*



## YLF Graduate Continued

My friend Meagan also has a reading and writing learning disability. She said, "I was diagnosed in second grade and finally came to terms in tenth grade." I believe this is true with my life as well. I didn't want to tell anyone I had a learning disability. When I kept on going to the resource room to take my tests then I finally came to terms with it.

When I went to YLF in 1999 my friend Karma Quick was in my group and she is deaf. She is a junior at Central College in Pella. She is majoring in human services. She said, "As for being different goes, I have proved to myself that I could do whatever I wanted to do. I could accomplish what I wanted to accomplish and I wasn't going to let my disability or any discrimination stand in my way of achieving my goals and I have that attitude to this very day." I think everyone that goes through YLF feels this way at the end of the week. I know I did because I didn't want my disability to stop me.

Everyone at YLF learns so much about his or her disability and everyone else's. At the end of YLF no one wants to leave because they have made life long friends. Everyone keeps in contact with each other. Its like a great big community that will help you get through tough times.



## Staff Services

Staff of the division provides a variety of services to lowans with disabilities, family members, service providers, and Iowa businesses.

Examples include:

- Advise on disability laws and regulations related to employment and your rights and responsibilities
- Provide access surveys of your facility and make low cost/no cost recommendations for improvement
- Assist in working through problems encountered in your rehabilitation program to help you obtain or retain employment
- Research and respond to disability and employment related questions
- Train employers and service providers on disability awareness, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other topics related to employment and disability
- Advise on making goods and services available to lowans with disabilities
- Provide informational materials and videos
- Refer individuals to appropriate programs, services and resources
- Support local disability advocacy committees in Iowa communities to improve employment opportunities to their citizens

Contact us for assistance at  
1-888-219-0471 or  
[dhrr.disabilities@dhrr.state.ia.us](mailto:dhrr.disabilities@dhrr.state.ia.us)  
or visit our web site at  
[www.state.ia.us/dhrr/pd](http://www.state.ia.us/dhrr/pd)

***Disability Solutions that Work***